



**REPRESENTATIVE
JEFF MORRIS**

**NEW DISTRICT OFFICE
(MAY 2002 - DEC. 2002):**

1330 A South Second St., Ste 100
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

TELEPHONE:
360-428-1022

OLYMPIA OFFICE:
PO Box 40600
414 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

REP. JEFF MORRIS
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

REPRESENTATIVE 40TH DISTRICT JEFF MORRIS

REPORTS TO THE 40TH DISTRICT

Dear Neighbor:

Several states across the west faced budget deficits caused by the tragic events of 9/11. Heading into a recession, the economic shock caused by the terrorists worsened an already daunting budget situation.

For the first time in my memory during a recession the Legislature was able adjourn on time without further harming the economy. We totally re-wrote the state budget in half the time it normally takes to write one.

Furthermore, we avoided raising general taxes or making major reductions in the work force — both of which harm a struggling economy.

We also put to the voters this November a large public investment package mainly funded by an increase in the gas tax to start the process of getting our roads and ferry system back into shape.

Although much of our time was focused on the state budget, I also spent time on many issues impacting you here at home.

In the limited space afforded by a newsletter, it is difficult to share with you all of the good work we did in Olympia this year. Inside, you will find information on: broadband access for the islands, the transportation plan, Orca whale research, and steps we took to improve the state's business climate, and funding our E-911 system.

It was a pleasure to once again represent you in Olympia. I appreciate all your help in keeping me informed of your opinion—it makes this job easier.

Sincerely,

Jeff Morris
State Representative



WEBSITE: www.leg.wa.gov/house/members

EMAIL: morris_je@leg.wa.gov

COMMITTEES:

Chair, Technology, Telecommunications & Energy
President, Pacific NorthWest Economic Region
Select Committee on Community Security
Finance

HOTLINE: 800-562-6000

HEARING IMPAIRED: 800-635-9993

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing



REPRESENTATIVE JEFF MORRIS



TRANSPORTATION

After several years of hand wringing in Olympia, we finally passed a transportation plan that will significantly improve **road safety** and **relieve traffic congestion** in

Washington State and renew our commitment to the state ferry system. I voted to put the tax package on the November ballot to give you a direct say on the largest single public investment in our State's history.

This plan, which will be on the November ballot, includes a 9 cent increase in the gas tax - introduced over a two-year period and expected to cost approximately \$4.50 a month for the average driver - and other fees that will generate a total of \$7.7 billion dollars: \$6.1 billion for congestion relief and road safety on highways; \$1.2 billion for passenger-only ferries, buses, rail and \$330 million for local transportation projects.

Without these necessary investments, I believe that we would be jeopardizing the economic viability of our region and the state for many years to come.

\$595 MILLION IN AUTO FERRIES AND TERMINALS

The transportation plan includes \$322 million for four new auto ferries. There are four boats in the current fleet - part of the steel-electric class - that were originally built in 1927. Three of them are used on the Port Townsend - Key-stone run, and the other is used for inter-island service in the San Juans.

It also includes \$173 million to design and construct multi-modal terminals in Anacortes and Mukilteo. The idea is to make it easier to get off a ferry and on a bus as quickly and easily as possible.

Furthermore, recognizing that we did not keep up with preservation and making up for past under-investment - catching up and keeping up, if you will - the plan includes \$100 million for the preservation of existing terminals and vessels.

In addition to all of this money earmarked for the state ferry system, the plan also includes adequate funding to reconfigure the HOV lanes in Everett, add additional lanes to I-5 from Burlington to Fredonia and replace the 2nd Street Bridge in Mount Vernon.

These investments in the ferry system and the projects that will directly benefit people living in the 40th district, and their importance to the regional economy, are the reasons why I will be supporting this plan in November.



IMPROVING THE STATE'S BUSINESS CLIMATE

Boeing, Microsoft, biotechnology firms, small businesses in Skagit & Whatcom counties and others around the state have long talked about the need to re-examine the competitiveness of our state's business climate. If we are going to pull ourselves out of this recession, we need to ensure that Washington State is an attractive place to do business.

As the new chair of the House Telecommunications, Technology and Energy Committee, one of my first priorities was to look at ways in which our state hinders private investment and enterprise in our local phone and electrical systems.

Several bills considered in my committee were designed, in part, to help keep our state competitive. HB 1005 made it easier for utility companies to work with the Department of Natural Resources to provide broadband service to the islands, HB 2637 was designed to maintain a reliable energy system and HB 2845, calling for a performance audit of the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), would have helped our state compete for investments made by private utilities across the West.

At the same time, other committees looked at bills that would 1) simplify municipal taxes and fees, 2) reform and streamline permitting, 3) stimulate economic development with a variety of funding options for transportation and other significant infrastructure investments, and 4) foster community renewal to create and maintain jobs.

We should not ignore the concerns of these businesses - everything from large multinationals to local mom-and-pops. Keeping our state competitive will ensure the long-term viability of key sectors of the economy - telecommunications, technology, and energy among them - and, ultimately, keep jobs in Washington State.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tulip growing in the Skagit Valley had its start with a Mrs. Mary Brown Stewart who began with just a few bulbs from Holland in 1906.

REPORTS TO THE 40TH DISTRICT



BROADBAND ACCESS FOR THE ISLANDS

If you live on the Islands, get ready for Broadband.

E-Commerce. Telemedicine. Online Education. These are just some of the new technologies that residents of the San Juans will be able to access now that we've gotten government out of the way. Orcas Power and Light and Century Telephone will now be able to lay cable for broadband technology between the islands and the mainland as a result of our passing HB 1005.

The rates that the Department of Natural Resources wanted to charge local phone companies for laying cable over state-owned aquatic land were exorbitant, and were keeping island dwellers stuck in the 20th century.

After years of negotiating, we were finally able to broker a compromise between public utilities and the Department of Natural Resources to ensure that consumers would have access to the latest Internet technology. We did this by making the easement assessment on State-owned aquatic lands more reasonable.

This issue remained unresolved for over six years. This solution will save money for consumers across the state, many of whom live in our district.



BORDER CONTROL: BALANCING SECURITY & COMMERCE

This year, as President of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region - a public-private partnership that promotes trade and economic development in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon - I have worked with colleagues in both countries, Ottawa and Washington, DC to address border security issues.

On this side of the border, we've worked with Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, Sen. Maria Cantwell, Rep. Rick Larsen, Rep. George Nethercutt and John Pennington, the Regional Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A truly coordinated system of exit and entry to the United States and Canada would balance security concerns and support one of the largest trading relationships in the world.

While pursuing an overall strategy of enhancing security and facilitating trade, we must work closely with local jurisdictions to develop solutions and increase cooperation in border management, with a particular focus on sharing vital law enforcement information.



INCREASING SECURITY IN WASHINGTON STATE

I was proud to serve on a temporary committee established this session to oversee the state's anti-terrorism efforts. Our goal: Ensuring that our state is prepared to prevent a terrorist attack or respond in the awful event that one may occur.

We worked hard to pass legislation that would give law enforcement and state agencies new tools to stamp out terrorism. Throughout the committee's deliberations, I was mindful of the need to balance the concerns of civil libertarians and our friends in law enforcement. In the House, we succeeded in passing a package of proposals that would set penalties for acts of terrorism, expand law enforcement's ability to monitor communications of suspected terrorists, limit public disclosure of emergency preparedness documents and require emergency management plans to prepare for terrorism and other man-made disasters.

The Senate blocked many of these bills, including efforts to examine our region's critical infrastructure (power plants, etc.) and our border policies (balancing commerce and security).

Next year, we will continue to work to strengthen our anti-terrorism capabilities and make sure that all levels of government from the attorney general's office to local police departments are working together to make our state a safe one.

DID YOU KNOW?

Between 1999 and 2001, the Washington State Ferries carried over 11 million vehicles and 26 million people.

Check out the ferries online at: www.ferrycam.net



REPRESENTATIVE JEFF MORRIS



CAN YOU SPARE \$15 FOR ORCA WHALE RESEARCH?

You give a \$15 donation and get an Orca whale sticker for your license plate, with a significant portion going toward Orca whale research. You get to show everyone that you support Orca whales.

A pretty good idea, don't you think? Unfortunately the State Senate Ways and Means Committee didn't agree.

These stickers would have been a good opportunity for companies like Starbucks and Safeway to partner with the state on something worthwhile - trying to save the Orca whale populations in the San Juans. They would have sold the stickers to the public on behalf of the state and then forwarded the money to an Orca whale research fund.

Although we have done quite a bit of research on Orca pods in the last twenty-five years – particularly around the pods' family structure, social behavior, acoustics and diets - there is still much we do not know.

Hopefully next year, during a longer session in Olympia, and with the experience of watching television news reports on different Orca's struggling to survive in Puget Sound we might be able to pass this bill next year and increase the amount of money devoted to Orca whale research.



Rep. Jeff Morris meeting with advocates for increased Orca whale research in Olympia.

CALLING 911 FROM A CELL PHONE?

When you dial 911 from a cell phone you will soon get the same response from emergency services as you do when you call from a regular phone.

Cell phone calls to 911 take three times as long to process to determine the location of the caller under the current system. This is dangerous, because overall cell phone use is increasing and 36 percent of 911 calls come from cell phones. Technology is available to pin down the location of cell phone calls to 911. It will be particularly helpful for finding lost hikers.

Under HB 2595, cell phones and regular phones will both – for the first time — help fund our Enhanced 911 service equally. Consumers will be able to choose between cell phones and regular phones for home use – knowing someone will show up at their door when they need help using either technology.

This is part of our overall effort to be technology-neutral when it comes to Government regulation.

